



# **THE AUSTRALIAN LABOUR MARKET, 1991**

**Selected Articles  
from Statistics Weekly**

## INTRODUCTION

Every month the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) delivers new insights into the Australian labour market from its monthly labour force survey.

While the main focus is usually on changes to the unemployment rate and levels of employment and unemployment, there are numerous other aspects which are of interest. More detailed information is made available in a variety of media, including *Statistics Weekly* - an ABS weekly publication which has all the highlights of the ABS' recent releases.

*Statistics Weekly* presents many summary articles on the nature and the dynamics of the labour market. They describe the results of the ongoing Monthly Labour Force Survey and associated supplementary surveys. This brochure presents a compilation of those articles published for the most part during 1991, which illustrate the wide range of information available from the ABS' labour statistics program.

The topics covered are many and varied. They range over the state of the labour market; the demographic characteristics of the working age population; the nature of employment; the job search experience of the unemployed; projections of the future labour force and so on.

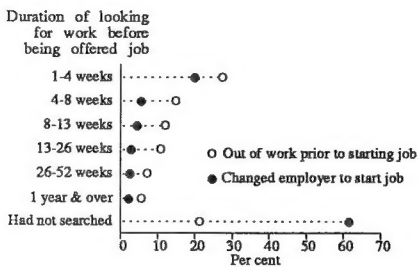
In each case the articles give just a taste of the vast range of labour statistics available from the ABS. More information about the products and services offered by the ABS from the labour statistics program can be gained by contacting any of the ABS offices listed on page 27.

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## More than 1.8 million jobs started in 1989-90

PERSONS WHO STARTED A JOB IN THE YEAR ENDING JULY 1990



A total of 1,880,300 persons started a job for wages or salary in the twelve months to July 1990, of whom 63 per cent had started a full-time job.

Of the total number, 1,069,000 had been out of work before starting their job, while 811,300 changed employer to start the job.

There were a further 515,600 persons who had looked for, but not started, a job for wages or salary in the last year.

Of those who changed employer to start their new job, 18 per cent spent 4 weeks or more looking for work. For those who were out of work prior to starting their job, 51 per cent were in this category.

These findings are among the results of an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey conducted in association with the regular monthly labour force survey in July 1990.

The survey also shows that, of the persons who started a job for wages or salary:

- ☐ 40 per cent approached the employer to obtain a job they knew was available
- ☐ 35 per cent obtained their job by approaching the employer, without knowing that the job was available
- ☐ 25 per cent were employed as a result of the employer approaching the jobseeker
- ☐ 87 per cent had worked before
- ☐ 71 per cent of those who started a part-time job were females.

Persons who changed employer to start their job were far more likely to be working in their preferred occupation (81%) than those who were out of work prior to starting the job (63%).

*For further information, order the publication Successful and Unsuccessful Job Search Experience, Australia (6245.0), or contact (06) 252 7204.*

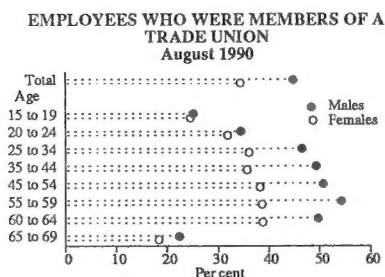
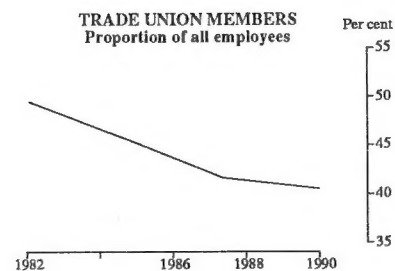
## Decline in union membership slows

The proportion of employees who were trade union members in August 1990 was 41 per cent, compared with the estimate of 42 per cent in 1988.

Thus the steep decline in union membership through the 1980s - 50 per cent of employees were union members in 1982 - appears to have slowed.

In August 1990, 2,659,600 employees were members of a trade union in connection with their main job. This represents 41 per cent of the 6,565,600 employees aged 15 to 69 who were employed during this period.

Approximately 45 per cent of male and 35 per cent of female employees were trade union members in the survey period. Among permanent employees, 49 per cent of males and 41 per cent of females were members of a trade union. For casual employees, these estimates were 20 per cent for males and 18 per cent for females.



### EMPLOYEES WHO WERE TRADE UNION MEMBERS

|         | August 1986              |   | August 1990              |   |
|---------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
|         | Number of members ('000) | Proportion of employees who were trade union members (per cent) | Number of members ('000) | Proportion of employees who were trade union members (per cent) |
| Males   | 1685.1                   | 50  | 1683.8                   | 45  |
| Females | 908.8                    | 39  | 975.8                    | 35  |
| Persons | 2593.9                   | 46  | 2659.6                   | 41  |

The distribution of weekly earnings from main job shows that both male and female trade union members earn, on average, more than persons who are not union members. However, for full-time employees, male mean weekly earnings were the same, regardless of trade union membership while female union members earned \$35 more per week than non-members. Male union members who worked part-time earned \$50 per week more than their counterparts who were not a member of a trade union. For females, this difference was \$45.

Employees who worked less than 35 hours per week in their main job were less likely to be a member of a trade union than employees working 35 hours or more (35% and 42% respectively).

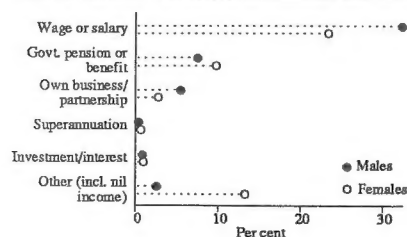
Young persons were less likely to be members of a trade union. For those aged 15 to 19 years, 25 per cent were union members. For those aged 20 to 24 years one employee in three was a union member.

Superannuation coverage has spread to 77 per cent of union members. Only 55 per cent of employees who were not a member of a trade union have superannuation.

For more information, order the publication *Trade Union Members*, Australia (6325.0), or contact (06) 252 6503.

## Migrants in the labour force

MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME OF MIGRANTS  
Aged 18 and over who arrived in Australia after 1970



The number of migrants who arrived in Australia after 1970, aged 18 years or over on arrival and who had obtained permanent residency status was estimated to be 1,158,900 at September 1990.

Of this total, 72 per cent were classified as being in the labour force, with participation rates of 86.0 per cent for males and 57.5 per cent for females. For the labour force as a whole the corresponding participation rates were 76.1 per cent and 52.7 per cent.

Labour force participation rates were highest for unsponsored principal applicants (83.0%) and for those from New Zealand (82.5%). For sponsored principal applicants the labour force participation rate was 68.5 per cent.

The unemployment rate for the migrants identified in paragraph one was 9.7 per cent at September 1990. (For the total labour force, the rate was 7.3%) Migrants born in Asia had the highest unemployment rate at 12.9 per cent, while those migrants whose birthplace was America or Oceania had unemployment rates of 7.2 and 7.3 per cent respectively. Migrants from Europe and Africa had unemployment rates of 8.7 per cent.

The graph at left shows the main source of income for males and females. Overall, 56 per cent of migrants received a wage or salary as their main source of income at September 1990, 17 per cent of migrants nominated a government pension or benefit as their main source of income, 9 per cent relied on their own business or partnership, and 2 per cent received investment or interest. Only 0.3 per cent of the migrants surveyed received superannuation, while 16 per cent reported 'other' sources (including nil income).

*For further information, order the publication Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Migrants, Australia (6250.0), or contact (06) 252 6661.*

## Sharp increase in full-time tertiary education numbers

There was a 13 per cent increase in the number of young people attending tertiary education institutions between September 1988 and September 1990.

The education participation rate for people between 15 and 24 years of age increased in the same period from 18.2 per cent to 20.3 per cent. The great bulk of the increase (61,500 out of 62,500) occurred among those attending full time.

Overall in September 1990, 45 per cent of the civilian population aged 15 to 24 were attending an educational institution. Full-time students accounted for 82 per cent of those 1,232,500 undergoing education.

Of those attending an educational institution the largest subgroup was attending school (55%) while 23 per cent were attending higher education institutions, 19 per cent were at TAFE or technical college, and 3 per cent attended other educational institutions.

### EDUCATION ATTENDANCE AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION, SEPTEMBER 1990

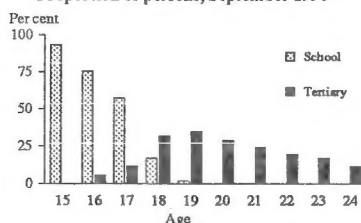
Persons aged 15 to 24  
'000

| <i>Educational institution</i>   | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i> | <i>Persons</i> |
|----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| Attending school                 | 342.4        | 336.5          | 678.9          |
| Attending a tertiary institution |              |                |                |
| Higher education                 | 132.0        | 150.3          | 282.3          |
| TAFE/technical college           | 147.4        | 83.7           | 231.2          |
| Other                            | 14.0         | 26.2           | 40.2           |
| Total tertiary                   | 293.4        | 260.3          | 553.6          |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>635.7</b> | <b>596.7</b>   | <b>1,232.5</b> |

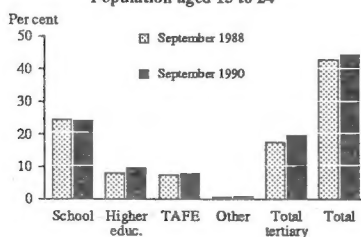
At September 1990, 48.4 per cent of all students in the age group were female, but females had accounted for 83 per cent of the significant increase in attendance at all educational institutions since 1988.

For further information, order the publication *Labour Force Status and Educational Attendance, Australia (6272.0)*, or contact (06) 252 6578.

SCHOOL OR TERTIARY INSTITUTION ATTENDANCE  
Proportion of persons, September 1990



EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION ATTENDANCE  
Population aged 15 to 24



## Sharp increase in retrenchments

The estimated number of people retrenched during the year ended February 1991 was 560,500. This represents a 47 per cent increase over the year ended February 1990 in which 381,600 people were retrenched.

Of those retrenched to the year ended February 1991, 65 per cent were male and 35 per cent were female.

The proportion of workers who were job mobile (that is, changed employer/business or locality) remained at the February 1990 level of 22 per cent. There was no difference in the job mobility rate between males and females (also 22%).

There were marked differences in job mobility rates across age groups. Persons aged 20 to 24 were the most job mobile (31%), while those aged 55 to 69 were the least job mobile (10%).

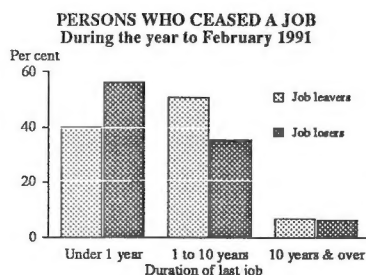
Persons who had been in their current job for less than a year but who were working at both February 1990 and February 1991, numbered 1,033,200. Of these:

- ☐ 386,100 (37%) changed industry;
- ☐ the community services industry had the lowest proportion (26%) of persons changing industry;
- ☐ the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and manufacturing industries had the highest proportion (46%) of persons changing industry;
- ☐ 315,400 (31%) changed occupation;
- ☐ professionals changed occupation least (17%);
- ☐ labourers and related workers (43%) as well as plant and machine operators and drivers (42%) changed occupation most.

**PERSONS WHO CEASED A JOB  
DURING THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 1991**  
Thousands

| <i>Reason for ceasing last job</i> | <i>Males</i>   | <i>Females</i> | <i>Persons</i> |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Job loser (involuntary)            | 476.9          | 342.0          | 818.9          |
| Job leaver (voluntary)             | 611.7          | 581.9          | 1,193.6        |
| <i>Total</i>                       | <i>1,088.6</i> | <i>924.0</i>   | <i>2,012.7</i> |

*For further information, order the publication Labour Mobility, Australia (6209.0), or contact (06) 252 7204.*



## Towards a better educated nation

Forty-one per cent of the population aged 15 to 69 had at least one post-school qualification in February 1991, according to the annual survey of educational attainment. This estimate of 4,896,100 persons, was four percentage points higher than in 1986.

Conversely, persons without post-school qualifications (6,491,900) had dropped from 59 per cent to 54 per cent of the population over the same period. The remainder were still at school.

In 1991 the number of persons with degrees numbered more than one million (1,047,200) for the first time. There were also 1,571,700 persons with a trade qualification, 2,229,200 with a certificate or diploma and 47,900 with some other type of post-school educational qualification.

In the year to February 1991, employment of persons with post-school qualifications increased by 83,300 or two per cent, unemployment by 101,000 or 60 per cent, and 12,800 more such persons were not in the labour force.

The estimates for persons without post-school qualifications show a different picture. Among this group there was a decrease of 152,100 or 4 per cent in employment, an increase of 109,000 or 29 per cent in unemployment, and a small increase of 1,100 among persons not in the labour force.

Some of the other characteristics of the 4,896,100 persons with post-school qualifications include:

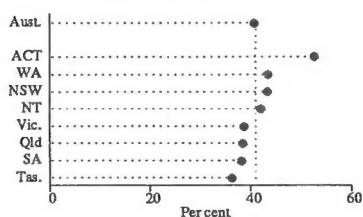
- ☐ 77 per cent were employed in February 1991;
- ☐ 70 per cent were married;
- ☐ 41 per cent had obtained their qualifications since 1981;
- ☐ 29 per cent were born overseas; and
- ☐ 16 per cent had gained their qualifications overseas.

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PERSONS AGED 15 TO 69 '000

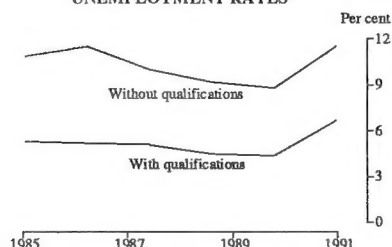
|                                    | February        |                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                    | 1986            | 1991            |
| With post-school qualifications    | 3,968.0         | 4,896.1         |
| Degree                             | 826.1           | 1,047.2         |
| Trade qualification                | 3,004.1         | 1,571.7         |
| Certificate or diploma             |                 | 2,229.2         |
| Other                              |                 | 47.9            |
| Without post-school qualifications | 6,394.8         | 6,491.9         |
| Still at school                    | 501.4           | 597.8           |
| <b>All persons</b>                 | <b>10,864.3</b> | <b>11,985.9</b> |

For further information, order the publication *Labour Force Status and Educational Attainment, Australia (6235.0)*, or contact (06) 252 6578.

PERSONS WITH POST-SCHOOL  
QUALIFICATIONS  
February 1991



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES



## Labour force activity remains high

The proportion of females who participated in the labour force at some time during a given year remains high, having risen steadily from 60 per cent for the year ended February 1985 to 67 per cent for both March 1990 and March 1991. Male participation has remained steady at around 86 per cent over this period.

These results are from the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics' survey of Labour Force Experience for the year ended March 1991.

Of females, those in the 20-24 year age group have recorded the highest labour force participation rate in each of the past seven surveys. Participation by married females has grown steadily, from 55 per cent in 1985 to 65 per cent in 1991. For married females, those aged between 45 and 54 years recorded the largest participation rate increase, from 57 per cent in 1985 to 69 per cent in 1991. Males aged between 20 and 54 years have recorded participation rates over 90 per cent from 1985 onwards.

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION DURING THE PRECEDING YEAR  
Per cent

|         | February 1985 | February 1988 | March 1991 |
|---------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Males   | 86.1          | 85.5          | 86.3       |
| Females | 60.0          | 63.0          | 67.3       |
| Persons | 73.1          | 74.3          | 76.9       |

Of the 8.7 million persons who worked at some time during the year, 5.8 million (67%) worked for the full 52 weeks. Some 86 per cent of male workers worked all their weeks on a full-time basis compared with 53 per cent of female workers.

The number of persons who spent some time out of the labour force was 5.2 million, 2.8 million of which spent no time in the labour force during the year. Of women who were out of the labour force at some time during the year, 62 per cent reported their main activity as 'home duties/childcare'. Males reported their main activities when not in the labour force as retired or voluntarily inactive (28%) and attending an educational institution (28%).

*For further information, order the publication *Labour Force Experience, Australia* (6206.0), or contact (06) 252 6503.*



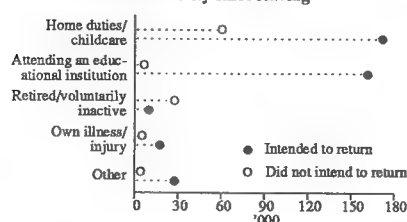
## Survey finds big rise in newly discouraged jobseekers

There were 58,800 discouraged jobseekers amongst those who left the labour force in the year to April 1991 compared with 15,000 in the year to April 1988, the last time this survey was run.

Of the 4,844,400 persons not in the labour force (that is, neither employed or unemployed) at April 1991, 565,800 left the labour force within the past twelve months. Of these, 390,900 persons intended to return to the labour force, 55 per cent of them indicating a preference to return to part-time work.

The number of females who departed the labour force was almost double the number of male departures yet women comprised only 42 per cent of the labour force at April 1991.

PERSONS INTENDING TO RETURN TO THE LABOUR FORCE, APRIL 1991  
Main activity since leaving



PERSONS WHO HAVE LEFT THE LABOUR FORCE  
'000

|                  | Age group in years |          |          |             |
|------------------|--------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
|                  | 15 to 24           | 25 to 44 | 45 to 59 | 60 and over |
| <b>Males —</b>   |                    |          |          |             |
| November 1985    | 48                 | 31       | 22       | 37          |
| April 1988       | 67                 | 38       | 30       | 31          |
| April 1991       | 89                 | 40       | 31       | 35          |
| <b>Females —</b> |                    |          |          |             |
| November 1985    | 84                 | 177      | 46       | 16          |
| April 1988       | 102                | 195      | 56       | 11          |
| April 1991       | 113                | 193      | 50       | 15          |

Of all those who left the labour force in the 12 months to April 1991, 341,500 worked immediately prior to leaving the labour force, and 224,300 looked for work immediately prior to leaving. For persons whose last labour force activity was working, 39 per cent had lost their job while the remainder left their jobs voluntarily.

For persons whose last labour force activity was looking for work: 49 per cent ceased looking for personal reasons; 26 per cent gave up looking for work because they became discouraged jobseekers; and 44 per cent were aged 15 to 24.

For males the most common main activity undertaken while not in the labour force was 'attending an educational institution' (49%). For females, however, 'home duties/childcare' was the most commonly reported main activity (68%), with 'attending an educational institution' (25%) the second most common activity.

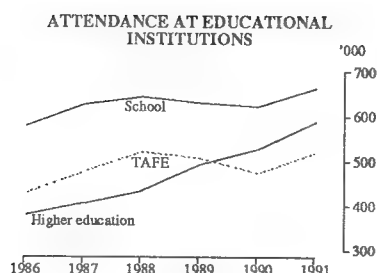
The most common occupation group for women who had been working was 'salespersons and personal service workers' (28%) whereas for males it was 'labourers and related workers' (33%). The most frequently reported industry of previous employment was the wholesale and retail trade industry, closely followed by community services.

For further information, order the publication *Persons Who Have Left the Labour Force, Australia* (6267.0), or contact (06) 252 6661.

## Post-compulsory education growth continues

In May 1991, 1,903,600 people or 17 per cent of the population aged 15 to 64 were attending a school or tertiary educational institution, according to the latest annual figures on transition from education to work. Five years ago the corresponding figure was 1,525,200 or 15 per cent of the population.

Over the five years to May 1991, the number of students has risen by 378,400 (25%). The largest increase was at higher education institutions where the number of students rose by 208,300 (55%). Increases of 89,000 (21%) at TAFEs and 83,900 (15%) at schools were also recorded from 1986 to 1991.



In May 1991 316,500 persons were reported as having left full-time education during the previous year, down 43,100 on the estimate from May 1990. Sixty-six per cent of persons identified as leavers in the survey were employed at May 1991 and 25 per cent were unemployed. Comparable figures for May 1990 were 78 per cent and 15 per cent.

On the other hand, 327,800 or more than 17 per cent of those attending an educational institution in May 1991 had not attended any such institution in the previous year. Of these, almost 80 per cent were studying part-time.

The figures reveal that, at the time of the survey, 975,600 students (51%) were employed — 547,700 on a full-time basis — and a further 146,200 (8%) were actively seeking work.

Educational status of 19 and 22 year olds at May 1991 was:

- ☐ 45 per cent of 19 year olds (132,700) and 24 per cent of 22 year olds (66,800) were attending an educational institution,
- ☐ 11 per cent of 19 year olds (31,300) and 32 per cent of 22 year olds (87,600) not currently attending had post-school qualifications,
- ☐ the remainder, 44 per cent (129,100) of 19 year olds and 44 per cent (119,900) of 22 year olds had attended at no higher level than secondary school and did not hold a post-school qualification.

The survey identified 139,100 apprentices, a decrease of 23,500 since May 1990. This decrease occurred almost entirely among first-year apprentices, down 25,500 since 1990. The industry most affected was manufacturing, where numbers fell from 44,000 to 30,000 over the year.

EDUCATIONAL ATTENDANCE AND LABOUR FORCE STATUS, MAY 1991  
Thousands persons aged 15 to 64

| In May 1991   | Employed | Unemployed | Not in the labour force | Total  |
|---------------|----------|------------|-------------------------|--------|
| Full-time     | 346      | 88         | 710                     | 1,144  |
| Part-time     | 629      | 58         | 72                      | 759    |
| Not attending | 6,663    | 664        | 2,209                   | 9,536  |
| Total         | 7,638    | 810        | 2,991                   | 11,440 |

For further information, order the publication *Transition from Education to Work*, Australia (6227.0), or contact (06) 252 6578.

## Increase in underemployed workers

There were 457,400 underemployed workers at May 1991 — that is persons employed part-time who would prefer to work more hours (85%) and full-time workers who worked less than full-time hours due to economic reasons such as short time and insufficient work (15%).

The May 1991 estimate of underemployment is 75 per cent higher than the estimate three years earlier in May 1988.

Estimates of underemployment are available monthly from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Labour Force Survey. A supplementary survey is conducted every three years in May to analyse the characteristics of underemployed persons in greater depth. This article presents results of the most recent supplementary survey.

The increase in underemployment has coincided with recent increases in unemployment. In May 1991, the underemployment rate was 5.3 per cent and the unemployment rate was 9.5 per cent, resulting in an underutilisation rate (the sum of these two measures) of 14.8 per cent. The underutilisation rate in May 1988 was 10.8 per cent.

Some 59 per cent of underemployed workers were female whereas females were 42 per cent of the labour force. Almost all (96%) females who were underemployed were part-time workers and the majority (71%) of underemployed males were also part-time workers.

FULLY EMPLOYED AND UNDEREMPLOYED PERSONS, MAY 1991  
'000

| Employment status |         | Males   | Females | Persons |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Employed          | 4,496.2 | 3,242.7 | 7,738.9 |         |
| Fully employed    |         | 4,306.5 | 2,975.0 | 7,281.6 |
| Underemployed     |         | 189.7   | 267.7   | 457.4   |
| Part-time         | 134.3   | 256.2   | 390.4   |         |
| Full-time         | 55.5    | 11.5    | 66.9    |         |

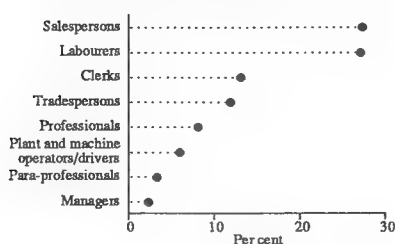
Of underemployed part-time workers, 38 per cent would have preferred to work 10 to 19 hours more per week, and 14 per cent would have preferred to work an extra 30 hours or more per week.

More than 90 per cent of underemployed part-time workers had been looking for work with more hours or were available to start such work within four weeks. Of this group, 20 per cent reported their main difficulty in finding such work was that there were 'no vacancies at all' and 16 per cent reported that there were 'no vacancies in their line of work'.

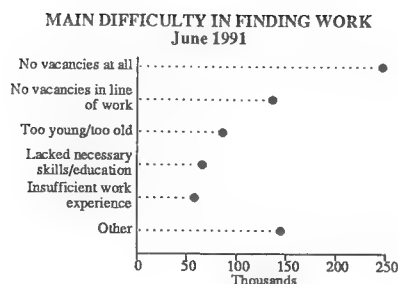
More than three-quarters of underemployed workers were wage and salary earners. Some 27 per cent were salespersons and personal service workers, 27 per cent were labourers and related workers and 25 per cent came from the wholesale and retail trades.

For further information, order the publication *Underemployed Workers, Australia* (6265.0), or contact (06) 252 6661.

UNDEREMPLOYED WORKERS, MAY 1991



## 'No vacancies at all' still major difficulty for unemployed



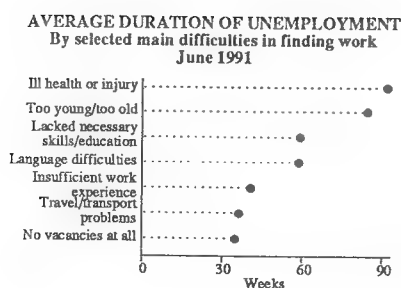
The belief that there were 'no vacancies at all' continues to be the dominant reported difficulty experienced by unemployed persons in finding work. Of the 740,100 persons looking for work in June 1991, 33 per cent gave this as the main difficulty in finding work compared with 17 per cent in July 1990. Their average duration of unemployment was 35 weeks.

The reason 'no vacancies in line of work', given by 18 per cent of all unemployed persons, has displaced 'considered too young or too old by employers' as the next most common difficulty in finding work. The 'too young or too old' problem has declined from 15 per cent in July 1990 to 12 per cent in June 1991.

These findings are among the results of an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey conducted in June 1991.

**MAIN DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING WORK  
Per cent**

| Difficulty                        | July 1982  | July 1990  | June 1991  |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| No vacancies at all               | 27         | 17         | 33         |
| No vacancies in line of work      | 16         | 15         | 18         |
| Considered too young/too old      | 15         | 15         | 12         |
| Lacked necessary skills/education | 7          | 13         | 9          |
| Other                             | 34         | 40         | 28         |
| <i>Total</i>                      | <i>100</i> | <i>100</i> | <i>100</i> |



The survey also showed:

- ☐ The percentage of unemployed persons reporting 'lacked necessary skills/education' or 'insufficient work experience' as their main difficulty in finding work decreased with age, from 24 per cent of those aged 15 to 19 years to 4 per cent of those aged 45 years and over.
- ☐ Some 55 per cent of the 86,500 persons who reported their main difficulty in finding work as 'considered too young or too old by employers' were aged 45 and over.
- ☐ 79 per cent of unemployed persons were registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES), of whom more than 9 in 10 were looking for full-time work.
- ☐ Persons without post-school qualifications had been unemployed for 11 weeks more on average than those with post-school qualifications (49 compared with 38 weeks).
- ☐ 25 per cent of unemployed persons had been unemployed for one year or more.

Overall, the average duration of current period of unemployment was 44 weeks, compared with 47 weeks in July 1990. This fall reflects the sharp increase in the number of unemployed persons in the past 12 months.

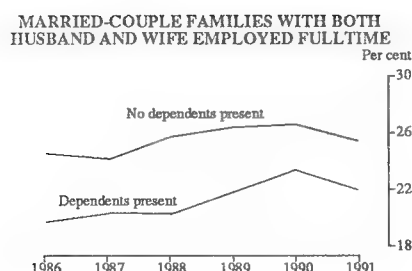
For further information, order the publication *Job Search Experience of Unemployed Persons, Australia (6222.0)*, or contact (06) 252 7204.

## Families and the labour force

An estimated 48 per cent of the nation's 4.5 million families had two or more members employed in June 1991 and a further 29 per cent had one member in employment.

Some 47 per cent of married-couple families had both partners employed. The proportion was highest in the Northern Territory (62%) followed by the ACT (61%). For the States the proportion ranged from 44 per cent in Tasmania to 48 per cent in South Australia and Western Australia.

The number of married-couple families in which the husband was unemployed was 183,500, an increase of 74,800 (69%) compared with June 1990. In 71 per cent of these families, the wife was also unemployed or not in the labour force.



MARRIED-COUPLE FAMILIES AND THE LABOUR FORCE  
'000 families

|                                | Husband  |            |                         | Total   |
|--------------------------------|----------|------------|-------------------------|---------|
|                                | Employed | Unemployed | Not in the labour force |         |
| Wife employed —                |          |            |                         |         |
| 1990                           | 1,858.0  | 23.4       | 74.9                    | 1,956.3 |
| 1991                           | 1,801.2  | 53.4       | 85.1                    | 1,939.7 |
| Wife unemployed —              |          |            |                         |         |
| 1990                           | 70.5     | 18.1       | 8.2                     | 96.8    |
| 1991                           | 81.1     | 29.9       | 6.6                     | 117.6   |
| Wife not in the labour force — |          |            |                         |         |
| 1990                           | 960.2    | 67.2       | 731.7                   | 1,759.1 |
| 1991                           | 928.9    | 100.1      | 762.8                   | 1,791.8 |
| Total —                        |          |            |                         |         |
| 1990                           | 2,888.7  | 108.7      | 814.8                   | 3,812.2 |
| 1991                           | 2,811.2  | 183.4      | 854.5                   | 3,849.1 |

In June 1991, 9 per cent of all families were one-parent families with the majority (87%) having a female parent. Some 44 per cent of females who headed a one-parent family were employed, with more than half of those (56%) employed full time. Male parents were employed in 70 per cent of instances, with 94 per cent of those being in full-time employment.

For one-parent families in which the parent was unemployed, 23 per cent of the parents had been unemployed for one year or longer.

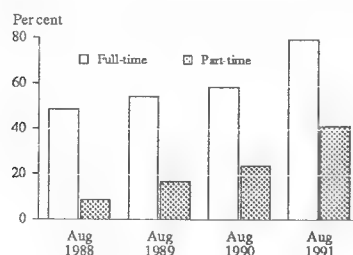
Of persons who were not members of a family and were living alone, 39 per cent were employed. Some 57 per cent of males in this group were employed, compared with 26 per cent of females.

An estimated 74 per cent of persons who were not members of a family and were not living alone were employed, with the vast majority of males (88%) being in full-time employment, as were 80 per cent of females.

For further information, order the publication *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, Australia (6224.0)*, or contact (06) 252 6018.

## Four in five workers now covered by super

EMPLOYEES COVERED BY SUPERANNUATION



The number of employees reporting that they were covered by superannuation was 4,870,500 or 79 per cent of all employees in July 1991. This estimate includes those employees covered by schemes other than those arranged or provided by their current employers.

Employees who received superannuation coverage as an employment benefit in their main job numbered 4,457,900 or 72 per cent of all employees. In August 1988, this figure stood at 42 per cent, rising to 53 per cent in August 1990 before the even steeper rise last year. The proportion of female employees receiving a superannuation benefit in respect of their main job was 66 per cent, compared with 77 per cent of males.

The proportion of full-time employees receiving a superannuation benefit rose from 60 per cent in August 1990 to 80 per cent in July 1991. Of employees working part-time, 42 per cent received a superannuation benefit, compared with 25 per cent in 1990.

The rise reflects both increased provision of superannuation by employers following National Wage Case Decisions, together with increased awareness among employees of the benefits now provided by their employers.

**EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS**  
Percentage of employees receiving benefits in main job

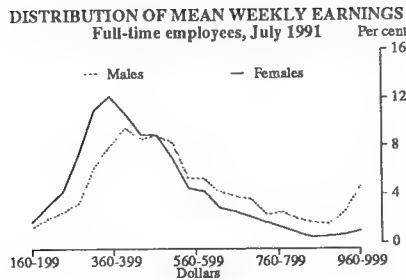
|                      | Working full-time |      | Working part-time |      | All employees |      |
|----------------------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|---------------|------|
|                      | 1988              | 1991 | 1988              | 1991 | 1988          | 1991 |
| Holiday leave        | 92                | 92   | 31                | 33   | 82            | 80   |
| Sick leave           | 92                | 92   | 31                | 33   | 81            | 80   |
| Superannuation       | 49                | 80   | 10                | 42   | 42            | 72   |
| Long-service leave   | 74                | 78   | 23                | 25   | 65            | 67   |
| Goods or services    | 15                | 17   | 15                | 19   | 15            | 18   |
| Transport            | 18                | 21   | 6                 | 5    | 16            | 17   |
| Telephone            | 10                | 10   | 4                 | 3    | 9             | 9    |
| Holiday expenses     | 4                 | 5    | 1                 | 1    | 4             | 4    |
| Medical              | 4                 | 4    | 1                 | 1    | 3             | 4    |
| At least one benefit | 96                | 97   | 55                | 66   | 89            | 91   |

The receipt of benefits varied by size of location (employees) and type of benefit. For example, the proportion of full-time employees receiving a long-service leave benefit increased as the size of the business (number of employees) increased. Of those people working at locations with less than ten employees, 51 per cent received a long-service leave benefit whereas 93 per cent of those working at locations with 100 or more employees received a long-service leave benefit.

On the other hand, a transport benefit was received by 29 per cent of full-time employees working at locations with less than 10 employees compared with 16 per cent of those working at locations with 100 or more employees.

For further information, order the publication *Employment Benefits, Australia (6334.0)*, or contact (06) 252 6503.

## Weekly earnings analysed



Male employees working 35 hours or more per week in all jobs reported mean weekly earnings of \$571 in July 1991, compared with female earnings of \$465.

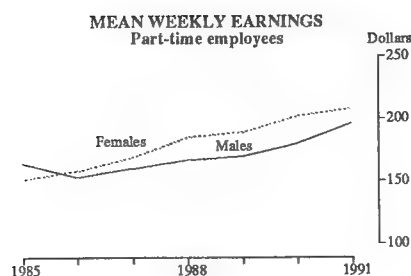
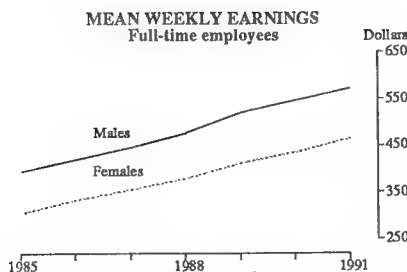
For employees working less than 35 hours per week in all jobs, males reported mean weekly earnings of \$196 while females received \$208.

The diagram at left shows the distribution of reported weekly earnings of full time employees. About 53 per cent of female full-time employees received mean weekly earnings of less than \$440. A smaller proportion (34%) of male full-time employees received mean weekly earnings of less than \$440.

Full-time employees working as managers or administrators earned greatest mean weekly earnings in July 1991. Males in this occupation group earned \$748 while females earned \$566. Those full-time employees who worked as labourers or related workers earned the lowest mean weekly earnings of \$424. Males earned \$446 and females \$352.

**MEAN WEEKLY EARNINGS, JULY 1991**  
Full-time employees in main job  
Dollars

| Occupation                                | Males | Females | Persons |
|---|-------|---------|---------|
| Managers and administrators               | 748   | 566     | 716     |
| Professionals                             | 747   | 621     | 701     |
| Para-professionals                        | 625   | 549     | 597     |
| Plant and machine operators and drivers   | 535   | 348     | 508     |
| Tradespersons                             | 489   | 367     | 481     |
| Clerks                                    | 553   | 442     | 477     |
| Salespersons and personal service workers | 546   | 387     | 465     |
| Labourers and related workers             | 446   | 352     | 424     |



Mean weekly earnings of full-time employees were highest in the mining industry (\$834), whilst the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry recorded the lowest (\$385).

Both male and female full-time workers reported receiving greater mean weekly earnings as the size of location (number of employees) at which they worked in their main job increased. For males, the mean weekly earnings at locations with less than 10 employees was \$489 while for those locations with 100 or more employees, the estimate was \$634. Equivalent estimates for females were \$389 and \$504 respectively.

Permanent employees in July 1991 received mean weekly earnings from their main job of \$516. For males, this was \$570 and for females \$431. Casual employees recorded mean weekly earnings of \$247 from their main job. For males and female casual employees, mean weekly earnings were \$340 and \$192 respectively.

For more information, order the publication *Weekly Earnings of Employees (Distribution)*, Australia (6310.0), or contact (06) 252 6503.

## Sharp increase in number of discouraged jobseekers

The number of discouraged jobseekers at September 1991 was 138,200, an increase of 37 per cent compared with September 1990. Some 75 per cent of discouraged jobseekers were women. Discouraged jobseekers are those persons who could start work, but are not actively seeking work because they believe that they could not get a job.

The reasons given by discouraged jobseekers for not actively seeking work reflected the general downturn in the labour market with 40,300 discouraged jobseekers believing that there were 'no jobs at all' compared with 9,000 twelve months earlier. As in previous surveys, the 45 to 64 year age group accounted for the greatest proportion of discouraged jobseekers (42%).

Amongst those persons who are not in the labour force, there are many people who may want to work, but are not actively looking or readily available to start in a job. These people are, nevertheless, an important group to take into account in analysing labour market statistics.

In total, 3,643,900 persons aged 15 to 69 were not in the labour force at September 1991. These persons were neither employed nor unemployed since they were not actively looking for work or were not readily available to start work. They comprised 30 per cent of the civilian population in this age group. Some 68 per cent of persons not in the labour force were women. The total included 2,547,500 people, such as retirees and students, who do not want to work.

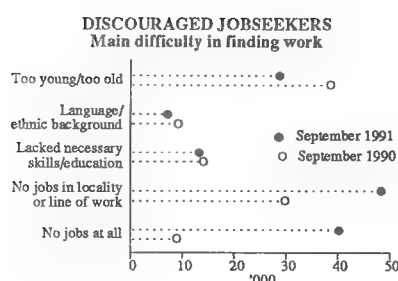
Some 819,300 persons not in the labour force were considered to be marginally attached to the labour force. These persons indicated a readiness to join the labour force if their circumstances were changed. Of these persons:

- ☐ 73 per cent were women, 41 per cent of whom said family reasons were preventing them from actively seeking work. The family reasons cited by most of these women (77%) were childcare related;
- ☐ 45 per cent intended to look for work in the next twelve months; and
- ☐ 71 per cent reported a preference for part-time work if they returned to the labour force.

### PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE (<sup>'000</sup>)

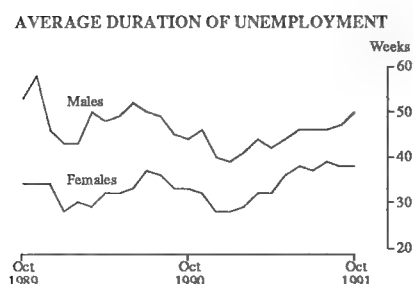
|   | September      |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|   | 1988           | 1989           | 1990           | 1991           |
| With marginal attachment to the labour force    | 721.7          | 708.4          | 752.5          | 819.3          |
| Wanted to work and actively looked for work     | 65.7           | 55.3           | 57.6           | 46.7           |
| Discouraged jobseekers                          | 83.8           | 76.1           | 100.9          | 138.2          |
| Other   | 572.2          | 577.0          | 594.1          | 634.5          |
| Without marginal attachment to the labour force | 2,898.8        | 2,858.7        | 2,797.6        | 2,824.6        |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>3,620.4</b> | <b>3,567.1</b> | <b>3,550.1</b> | <b>3,643.9</b> |

For further information, order the publication *Persons Not in the Labour Force*, Australia (6220.0), or contact (06) 252 6661.



## Duration of unemployment increasing

The average duration of unemployment has been gradually increasing since January 1991 following a decline since July 1990.



While this feature follows an apparent seasonal pattern, it must also be noted that the averages are strongly influenced by changes in unemployment levels. For instance, marked increases in the number of newly unemployed persons will cause the overall average duration of unemployment to fall. This feature explains the regular fall in the average in the summer months when unemployment is seasonally high.

In the two months to October 1991 however, survey results have shown that overall, average duration of unemployment has been higher than the corresponding statistics twelve months earlier (see table below). These two most recent results broke a sequence of 27 months in which the comparison with the same month in the previous year showed a lower average duration of unemployment (reflecting the rising level of unemployment during most of this period).

AVERAGE DURATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT  
Weeks

|         | October 1990 | October 1991 |
|---------|--------------|--------------|
| Males   | 43.7         | 50.1         |
| Females | 32.5         | 38.4         |
| Persons | 39.0         | 45.6         |



These findings are among the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and published in *The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)*.

LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED  
Proportion of the unemployed  
Per cent

|         | October 1990 | October 1991 |
|---------|--------------|--------------|
| Males   | 22.5         | 28.3         |
| Females | 16.8         | 23.2         |
| Persons | 20.1         | 26.3         |

The survey shows that the number of long term unemployed (i.e. persons unemployed for 52 weeks or more) has also been increasing and in October 1991 stood at 211,100 compared with 122,200 one year earlier. Of these persons:

- ☐ 50 per cent were former workers whose last full-time job was more than two years ago;
- ☐ 40 per cent had held a full-time job (lasting at least two weeks) between 12 and 24 months ago;
- ☐ 8 per cent were still looking for their first full-time job;
- ☐ 45 per cent were aged 35 years or older; and
- ☐ 66 per cent were males.

Other details on the duration of unemployment include:

- ☐ The average duration of unemployment for unemployed 15-19 year old males who left school in 1990 was 28.6 weeks while for females in the same age group it was 23.6 weeks.
- ☐ For unemployed married males the average duration of unemployment was 55.3 weeks, compared with 46.1 for those not married. For married and not married females the averages were 39.8 and 37.4 weeks respectively.

*For further information about these statistics or the availability of other data from the Labour Force Survey, contact (06) 252 6525.*

## Big rise in job losers

The number of unemployed persons who were job losers (i.e. persons who left their last full-time job involuntarily) increased significantly in the twelve months to November 1991.

Of those persons unemployed in November 1991, there were 363,100 job losers, an increase of 115,600 since November 1990. Job losers accounted for 61 per cent of the total increase in unemployment over the year (188,000). The number of male job losers rose by 92,000 to 278,200 and for females, job losers rose by 23,600 to 84,900. As a result, job losers made up 44 per cent of all unemployed persons in November 1991 compared with 39 per cent a year earlier.

Among the unemployed, some 66 per cent of male job losers had worked as tradespersons and labourers and related workers in their last full-time job while for females, 56 per cent had been employed as sales persons and personal service workers and clerks.

In addition to those job losers who join the ranks of the unemployed, a significant number of job losers withdrew from the labour force either temporarily or with no intention of looking for work again.

A survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in April 1991 showed that there were 131,900 job losers who had left the labour force in the previous twelve months. Of these persons, 56 per cent intended to return to the labour force. (At that time, there were 359,700 job losers who were defined as unemployed.)

These findings are among the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and published in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

UNEMPLOYED JOB LOSERS  
'000

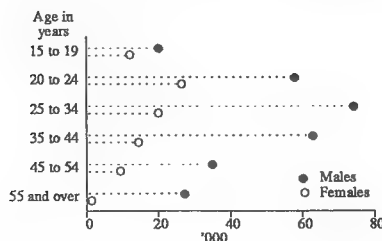
|            | Males | Females | Persons |
|------------|-------|---------|---------|
| November - |       |         |         |
| 1989       | 93.4  | 39.9    | 133.3   |
| 1990       | 186.2 | 61.3    | 247.5   |
| 1991       | 278.2 | 84.9    | 363.1   |

The survey also shows that 73 per cent (264,800 persons) of unemployed job losers had been laid off or retrenched. Of these persons:

- ☐ 59 per cent were less than 35 years of age;
- ☐ 30 per cent were laid off or retrenched from the manufacturing industry and 22 per cent were laid off or retrenched from wholesale and retail trade; and
- ☐ 78 per cent were males.

For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0), or contact (06) 252 6525.

UNEMPLOYED JOB LOSERS, NOVEMBER 1991



## Full-time employment rises in December



Strong rises in seasonally adjusted full-time employment for males and females in December 1991 partly offset the large fall in full-time employment recorded between October and November. Increases were also recorded in the number of unemployed persons, the unemployment rate and the participation rate.

The seasonally adjusted estimate of employed persons for December 1991 was 7,689,400, an increase since November 1991. Full-time employment rose by almost one per cent (up 52,300 to 5,960,800), with full-time employment for males and females increasing by 26,400 and 25,900 respectively. Part-time employment fell by 13,100 with the number of males employed part-time decreasing by 17,600.

The labour force participation rate rose by 0.3 percentage points to 63.3 per cent, with the female participation rate rising by 0.5 percentage points to 52.1 per cent. The participation rate for males was steady at 74.7 per cent.

### LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ESTIMATES Seasonally adjusted

|          | Employed             |                      |                               | Un-<br>employed<br>rate<br>— per cent — | Particip-<br>ation<br>rate |
|----------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
|          | Full-time<br>workers | Part-time<br>workers | Total<br>employed<br>— '000 — |   |                            |
| 1991 —   |                      |                      |                               |   |                            |
| October  | 5,998.9              | 1,687.4              | 7,686.4                       | 10.1                                    | 63.0                       |
| November | 5,908.5              | 1,741.6              | 7,650.1                       | 10.5                                    | 63.0                       |
| December | 5,960.8              | 1,728.5              | 7,689.4                       | 10.6                                    | 63.3                       |

The seasonally adjusted estimate of unemployed persons in December 1991 increased by 9,600 and now stands at 910,300. Male unemployment was relatively steady at 547,200. For females, unemployment increased by 9,400 to 363,100, mainly due to an increase of 8,500 in the number of females seeking part-time work.



The unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) for December 1991 was 10.6 per cent, compared with 10.5 per cent in November 1991. For males, the unemployment rate was unchanged at 10.9 per cent, while for females the unemployment rate rose by 0.2 percentage points to 10.1 per cent. The trend estimate of the unemployment rate continues to increase.

### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE Seasonally adjusted Per cent

|          | NSW  | Vic. | Qld | SA   | WA   | Tas. | Aust. |
|----------|------|------|-----|------|------|------|-------|
| 1991 —   |      |      |     |      |      |      |       |
| October  | 9.7  | 10.3 | 9.6 | 10.7 | 11.6 | 10.7 | 10.1  |
| November | 10.0 | 11.0 | 9.9 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 11.7 | 10.5  |
| December | 10.3 | 11.0 | 9.9 | 11.5 | 10.4 | 11.0 | 10.6  |

For further information order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary (6202.0)*, or contact (06) 252 6525.

## Australia's part-time workers

The proportion of employed persons who worked part-time has been generally increasing over the last ten years, rising from 17 per cent in December 1981 to 23 per cent in December 1991. (Part-time workers are defined as employed persons who usually work less than 35 hours a week and did so during the week prior to interview.)

This increase is mainly due to the rise in the number of females employed part time. In December 1991 they accounted for 17 per cent of total employment compared with 13 per cent in December 1981.

Some 68 per cent of women who were employed part time in December 1991 were married, and married females now account for 52 per cent of total part-time employment.

These findings are among the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and published in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

PART-TIME WORKERS  
'000

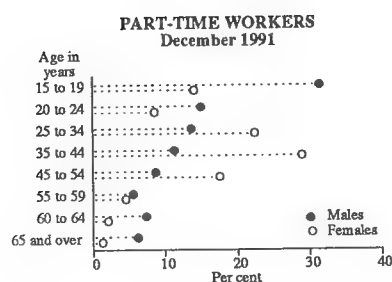
|                 | December 1981 | December 1986 | December 1991 |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Male            | 206.0         | 290.6         | 410.4         |
| Females         | 816.1         | 1081.7        | 1328.1        |
| Married females | 600.4         | 802.6         | 908.5         |
| Persons         | 1022.1        | 1372.3        | 1738.5        |

Nearly 29 per cent of all part-time workers reported a preference to work more hours in December 1991 compared with 24 per cent twelve months earlier. However, only 40 per cent of these persons had actively looked for full-time work in the previous four weeks.

Other details on part-time workers:

- ☐ 33 per cent were married females aged 25 to 44;
- ☐ 32 per cent of males working part time were aged 15 to 19;
- ☐ just over 30 per cent worked for 10 hours or less;
- ☐ 24 per cent of employed persons born in Australia were employed part time compared with 19 per cent for employed persons born outside Australia; and
- ☐ 53 per cent were employed in the wholesale and retail trade and community services industries and 29 per cent were employed as salespersons and personal service workers in November 1991.

For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0), or contact (06) 252 6525.



## Australia's unemployment rate compared

In December 1991, Australia's unemployment rate of 10.6 per cent was the highest amongst eight major Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. France, Canada and the United Kingdom also had unemployment rates above 10 per cent in December 1991 while the lowest rates recorded were 2.2 per cent and 3.6 per cent in Japan and Sweden respectively.

These are among the findings of a study of standardised civilian labour force data for the last twenty years recently published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Between the March quarter 1990 and the December quarter 1991, Australia also experienced the largest rise in its unemployment rate (4.2 percentage points) followed by the United Kingdom (3.6).

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES  
Seasonally adjusted

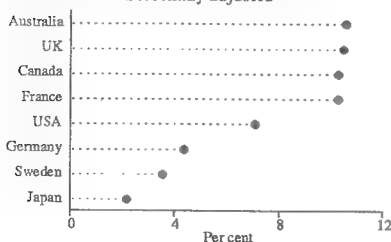
| Period   | Australia | UK   | Canada | France | USA | Germany | Sweden | Japan |
|----------|-----------|------|--------|--------|-----|---------|--------|-------|
| 1990     |           |      |        |        |     |         |        |       |
| Mar. qtr | 6.2       | 6.7  | 7.5    | 9.2    | 5.3 | 5.4     | 1.3    | 2.1   |
| Jun. qtr | 6.4       | 6.8  | 7.5    | 9.1    | 5.3 | 5.3     | 1.3    | 2.1   |
| Sep. qtr | 7.2       | 6.9  | 8.3    | 9.1    | 5.6 | 5.1     | 1.5    | 2.1   |
| Dec. qtr | 8.0       | 7.3  | 9.1    | 9.2    | 5.9 | 4.8     | 1.8    | 2.2   |
| 1991     |           |      |        |        |     |         |        |       |
| Mar. qtr | 8.7       | 8.2  | 10.2   | 9.4    | 6.5 | 4.6     | 2.1    | 2.1   |
| Jun. qtr | 9.4       | 9.2  | 10.3   | 9.8    | 6.8 | 4.5     | 2.6    | 2.1   |
| Sep. qtr | 9.9       | 10.0 | 10.4   | 10.0   | 6.8 | 4.6     | 2.8    | 2.2   |
| Dec. qtr | 10.4      | 10.3 | 10.3   | 10.2   | 6.9 | 4.5     | 3.2    | 2.2   |
| October  | 10.2      | 10.2 | 10.3   | 10.2   | 6.9 | 4.6     | 2.9    | 2.1   |
| November | 10.5      | 10.3 | 10.3   | 10.3   | 6.9 | 4.4     | 3.1    | 2.2   |
| December | 10.6      | 10.5 | 10.3   | 10.3   | 7.1 | 4.4     | 3.6    | 2.2   |

Germany, in the table above and graph at left, refers to the Federal Republic of Germany before unification. Other findings include:

- ☐ Japan and Sweden have maintained relatively low unemployment rates. For Japan, the unemployment rate rose to 2.0 per cent in 1976, and has remained between 2 and 3 per cent since. For Sweden, the rate did not exceed 3.5 per cent until December 1991, and for a substantial period between 1987 and 1991, the rate was between 1 and 2 per cent. The United States and Germany are the only other countries where the unemployment rate has remained below 10 per cent since 1972.
- ☐ The highest annual average unemployment rate since 1972 was 11.8 per cent, recorded by Canada in 1983 and the United Kingdom in 1983 and 1984. The lowest rate recorded was 0.7 per cent in 1972 and 1973 by the then Federal Republic of Germany.
- ☐ Since the March quarter 1990, Germany's unemployment rate has fallen from 5.4 per cent to 4.5 per cent. The rate for all other countries in the study has risen over this period.

For more information about the data available for the Labour Force Survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, contact (06) 252 6525.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, DECEMBER 1991  
Seasonally adjusted

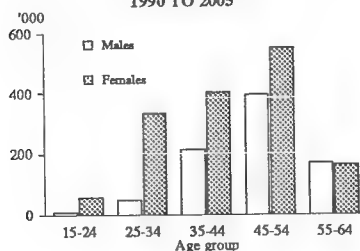


## Australian labour force projections

Australia's civilian labour force could reach 10.9 million persons by the year 2005, according to projections compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

These projections represent an increase of 2.4 million persons compared with the estimate of the labour force in mid 1990. The associated average annual rate of growth of the labour force is 1.7 per cent.

PROJECTED GAINS IN THE LABOUR FORCE  
1990 TO 2005



These projections are based on a study of labour force participation rate trend estimates to August 1990 and Australian population projections from 1989 to 2031. Two sets of projections are presented, corresponding to the 'high' and 'low' population projections published by the ABS in November 1990 (*Projections of the Populations of Australia, States and Territories 1989 to 2031*).

For both males and females, the major gains in labour force numbers are projected to occur in the 45 to 54 year age group. Between 1990 and 2005 the male labour force in this age group is projected to rise by up to 402,000, an increase of 33 per cent. For females, an increase of up to 558,000 or 51 per cent is projected.

Persons in older age groups are projected to contribute a larger share of the labour force. The representation of the 55 to 64 year age group is projected to grow from 7.6 per cent of the total labour force in 1990 to as much as 9.2 per cent in 2005.

LABOUR FORCE ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS BY AGE, PERSONS  
'000

| Year | Age group |         |         |         |       |             | Total    |
|------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|-------|-------------|----------|
|      | 15-19     | 20-24   | 25-44   | 45-54   | 55-64 | 65 and over |          |
| 1990 | 841.3     | 1,134.1 | 4,370.5 | 1,371.0 | 641.2 | 101.0       | 8,459.1  |
| 1995 | 766.2     | 1,237.7 | 4,774.9 | 1,735.6 | 663.2 | 114.4       | 9,292.1  |
| 2000 | 815.2     | 1,146.1 | 5,257.1 | 2,083.9 | 781.6 | 124.9       | 10,208.9 |
| 2005 | 839.3     | 1,220.3 | 5,400.2 | 2,331.2 | 990.2 | 137.2       | 10,918.4 |

The average annual growth rate for the male labour force is projected to reach 1.2 per cent between 1990 and 2005, and for females, 2.5 per cent over the same period. Such growth rates would shift the male/female ratio of the labour force from 59 per cent/41 per cent in 1990 to 54 per cent/46 per cent in 2005.

The male labour force participation rate is projected to decline from 75.6 per cent in 1990 to as low as 71.1 per cent in 2005, reflecting the substantially higher proportion of the male population aged 65 and over and a marked fall in the proportion of males aged 25 to 44.

For females, participation rates for each age group are generally projected to rise, resulting in an increase in the overall participation rate from 52.2 per cent in 1990 to 60.3 per cent in 2005.

For further information, order the publication *Labour Force Projections, Australia, 1992-2005* (6260.0), or contact (06) 252 6018.

## Behind the numbers — some facts about the labour force survey

The Monthly Labour Force Survey is by far the largest household survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Each month the survey records information from more than 70,000 individuals, using a random sample of about 31,000 private dwellings and a (much smaller) number of other dwellings such as hotels, motels and caravan parks.

The sheer size of this monthly exercise yields several advantages, not least of which is a high degree of statistical accuracy. In April 1991, for instance, when the ABS estimate of employed persons was 7.75 million, there was a 95 per cent probability that the true number of employed people in Australia was within just 45,600 of that number.

Such low 'standard errors' clearly indicate that, taking one month with another, the survey reliably reflects national labour market levels, movements and trends.

The Labour Force Survey is also an extremely useful vehicle for collecting data on a wide range of social and economic topics related to the labour market.

In 1991, supplementary topics surveyed along with the core questions included labour force experience, transition from education to work, superannuation and a profile of people who have left the workforce.

The basic labour force data are published in preliminary form fourteen working days after the completion of interviewing, while the results of the supplementary surveys are normally released some months afterwards.

The survey is conducted by specially trained interviewers, generally in the two weeks beginning on the Monday between the 6th and 12th of each month. The information obtained relates to the week before the interview (the 'reference week'), and the labour force category to which a person is assigned depends on his or her actual activity during that week.

The survey is designed to enable analysis of the labour force by a number of variables, including sex, age, birthplace, occupation, hours worked and so on. While some of these data are included in the monthly publications, much more detailed information is available from ABS offices in the form of standard and special tabulations and microfiche.

A more comprehensive description of the labour force survey, together with answers to some of the questions most commonly asked about employment and unemployment statistics, may be found in the new ABS Information Paper: *Measuring Employment and Unemployment* (6279.0), issued on 22 August, 1991.

*For further information about the labour force survey or the availability of labour force data products and services, contact (06) 252 6565, or any ABS State office.*

## LABOUR MARKET PUBLICATIONS

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Survey specific</b>                | A wide range of publications is available from ABS bookshops, giving the latest results from recent labour market surveys.               |
| <b>Compendium and special purpose</b> | Publications are also available which present historical summaries, overviews and technical information about ABS labour market surveys. |

## SPECIAL DATA SERVICES

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Special data services for unpublished and regional data</b> | A large amount of unpublished data is available to meet client's table specifications. Data for geographical areas based on Australian Standard Geographical Classifications is also available on request.   |
| <b>Electronic products</b>                                     | Statistics are available in electronic form for microcomputer and mainframe computer users. Statistics can also be delivered electronically via Discovery, PC-Ausstats and Telestats.  |
| <b>Library access to ABS publications</b>                      | ABS publications can be consulted at any ABS Office library or State library and at the National Library of Australia in Canberra.   |
| <b>Information consultancy services</b>                        | The consultancy service is a personalised service to help clients determine the statistical information available and relevant to their needs. Consultants have access to all ABS information and can provide data in the format of the client's choice. |
| <b>Statistical consultancy service</b>                         | Statistical consultants are available to plan surveys on any topic. They can help with survey design, sample selection, questionnaire design, data processing and analysis, etc.   |
|  | For details of all these special services contact any of the ABS Offices listed opposite.  |

## INFORMATION SERVICES

Inquiries regarding publications or any ABS product or service may be directed to Information Services, Australian Bureau of Statistics in any of the following offices:

### NEW SOUTH WALES

|                  |             |                       |               |
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| 3rd Floor        |             | General inquiries     | (02) 268 4611 |
| St Andrews House |             | Bookshop              | (02) 268 4620 |
| Sydney Square    | PO Box 796  | Special Data Services | (02) 268 4212 |
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